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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

22 May 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: USIB Comments on ONE Memorandum, "Prospects of the Somoza Regime in Nicaragua"

1. The USIB agencies concerned have all expressed agreement with subject memorandum (attached), which we circulated on 19 May with your request for comments. State had two queries on emphasis which it thought should be considered in any future briefing we prepared for you on this subject, and individual points were also raised by General Walsh and the Joint Staff. However, none of these comments was put forward as calling for revision of the memorandum.

2. The specific comments of the agencies are as follows:

a. State

State would emphasize the threat of a leftist invasion from Cuba less heavily than we did (paragraph 4), on the

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grounds that recent actions of the Cuban government had reduced the potential and appeal of the leftist group in Cuba and that the basic cleavage between Communist and non-Communist opposition groups is deeper than we implied. In addition, State would give somewhat greater consideration of the possibility of a purely internal attempt against the regime. Our only direct reference to this point was a statement (paragraph 5) that a purely internal revolt was unlikely to succeed, at least so long as there was no sharp economic deterioration.

b. Air Force

General Walsh expressed some misgivings on the last line of paragraph 5, which casts a slight doubt on the dependability of the Nicaraguan Air Force, though he finally endorsed the paper in full.

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c. The Joint Staff

A Joint Staff representative suggested that the border dispute between Nicaragua and Honduras might be a source of trouble, since the area in question (a several hundred square mile wedge of sparsely populated jungle stretching westward from the Caribbean) is much used for line-crossing and if a rebel invasion started there, Nicaragua might strike out at Honduras in retaliation.

d. Army and Navy

No comments.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

Sherman L. Kent for
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Assistant Director
National Estimates

-3-

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